

BM1 Edgar Culbertson

Story by ME1 Kevin Rofidal

Forty three years ago today [April 30], BM1 Edgar Culbertson lost his life during a rescue attempt when a Coast Guard team ventured out on the Duluth Entry Break wall pier to rescue three stranded teenage brothers. At the time, a furious storm was pounding Duluth – a day known by many as 'Black Sunday,' because of the intense storm that moved across Minnesota. Waves on Lake Superior were reportedly over 20 feet high; the lake had 36 degree water with gale force winds gusting up to 45 mph.

Three teenage brothers; Eric, 17, and twins Arthur, 16, and Nathan Halverson, 16, also died. The Duluth Police had been called when a witness saw one of the boys swept into the Lake Superior by a wave that knocked him off his feet while the three were at the end of the pier by the light. Duluth Police called the Coast Guard and a team of three volunteers ventured down the pier to search for the missing boys. The team of rescuers; BM1 Edgar Culbertson of Ferndale, Mich., BM2 Richard Callahan of Cicero, Ill., and FN Ronald Prei of St. Francis, Wisc., tethered themselves together with a rope. They reached the end of the pier and the boys were nowhere to be found. On their return down the pier, BM1 Culbertson was swept off his feet and over the side by a huge wave. Culbertson died as a result of his injuries despite the efforts of his shipmates. The boys were never found and were later presumed dead.



All three Coastguardsmen were issued the prestigious Coast Guard Medal for their bravery and heroism, Culbertson's was awarded posthumously. It's my honor to share the good news that BM1 Culbertson will now be added to the National Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington, D.C. during a ceremony to be held May 13, 2010. At the ceremony, 324 new names will be added to the memorial wall joining 18,983 fallen officers already etched in stone on these walls. The event is expected to draw nearly 20,000 people to the memorial near Judiciary Square in the nation's capitol.

BM1 Culbertson is survived by a son; Craig "Casey" Culbertson of Naperville, Ill., a daughter, Cristin Culbertson Alpert of Oak Park, Mich., and five grandchildren.

[BM1 Edgar Allen Culbertson](#)'s name can now be found on panel: 38-W: 27 at the National Law Enforcement Memorial.